

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of a polyurethane foam having improved long-term stability, comprising:

reacting

a) a polyisocyanate with

b) one or more compounds having at least two hydrogen atoms reactive with isocyanate groups, in the presence of one or more inhibitors in an amount of from 0.1% to 20% by weight, based on the weight of the polyurethane,

wherein the inhibitors are ~~embedded~~ encapsulated in a ~~substance~~ wax which is inert under the conditions of the polyurethane preparation, and

wherein the inhibitor is at least one selected from the group consisting of an  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated compound, a carboxylic acid, a carboxylic acid derivative, a ketone, an aldehyde, a lactone, a lactam, a cyclic ether, an ester, a sulfonic acid, a cyclic sulfonic ester, a sulfone, a salt of a metal of subgroup I, a salt of a metal of subgroup II, a salt of a metal of subgroup VIII, an organic cyclic compound, an inorganic acid, an organic acid, and an acid derivative which can liberate acids in a hydrolysis process.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~inert substances have~~ wax has a melting point such that ~~they melt~~ the wax melts during the reaction which results in the polyurethane.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~inert substances have~~ wax has a heat of fusion of from 50 to 250 joules/gram.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the melting point of the ~~inert substances~~ wax is from 20 to 150°C.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim [[2]] 1, wherein the wax contains one or more polar groups.

Claim 7 (Canceled).

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~embedded~~ encapsulated inhibitors are present in particulate form.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): A process as claimed in claim 8, wherein the particles have a median particle diameter of from 20 to 800  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A polyurethane ~~which can be~~ prepared by a process as claimed in claim 1.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitor is at least one selected from the group consisting of an  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated compound, a carboxylic acid, a ketone and an aldehyde.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitor is at least one selected from the group consisting of a lactone, a lactam, a cyclic ester, a cyclic sulfonic ester, and a sulfone.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitor is ~~embedded~~ encapsulated in a polar polyolefin wax.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 13, wherein the polar polyolefin wax is at least one selected from the group consisting of a polyethylene, a polypropylene, and a polybut-1-ene having a weight average molecular weight of from 500 to 20,000.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitors are present in an amount of from 0.5 to 10% by weight.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitor is a polyurethane degradation inhibitor.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein the wax is at least one of a natural wax, a chemically modified wax and a synthetic wax, and has a melting point of from 20 to 150°C.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitor is ~~embedded~~ encapsulated in a wax having a melting point of from 20 to 150°C and a heat of fusion of from 50 to 250 joules/gram; and the inhibitor is at least one selected from

the group consisting of an  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated compound, a carboxylic acid, a carboxylic acid derivative, a ketone, an aldehyde, a lactone, a lactam, a cyclic ether, a cyclic ester, a sulfonic acid, a cyclic sulfonic ester, a sulfone, an organic cyclic compound, an organic acid, and an acid derivative which can liberate acids in a hydrolysis process.

Claim 19 (New): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitor is an organic acid.

Claim 20 (New): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitor is at least one selected from the group consisting of adipic acid, dimethylpropionic acid, and maleic anhydride.

Claim 21 (New): The process as claimed in claim 19, further comprising:  
counteracting cleavage of the polyurethane formed after the reacting;  
wherein the counteracting is carried out with the inhibitor.